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Navy & Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS)
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This service distributes information and news to Sailors and Marines and their families, civilian employees, and retired members of the Navy and Marine Corps and their families. Further dissemination of this information is encouraged.

Headlines this week include:

Medical Team Comes to Rescue in Haiti
Surgeon Takes To Sky To Deliver Medicine
Corpsman Picked As Navy's Top Athlete
Navy Nutrition Guide Now Available
DOD Improves Marijuana Detection Techniques
Navy League Looking For Outstanding Naval People
TRICARE Question and Answer
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Headline: Medical Team Comes to Rescue in Haiti

Haiti--It started like just another Saturday for the Alpha Surgical Company (ASC) of the Second Medical Battalion, home based in Camp Lejeune, NC, and now deployed to Port au Prince, Haiti.

A 5:30 a.m. hike was followed by a staff meeting with Marine Col. J. W. Stull, the Commander of the U.S. Support Group-Haiti. Then, since it was a Saturday, the company took the rest of the day off for a picnic and field day.

They were on their way back to the warehouses that serve as their home and hospital for dinner and showers when LCPL David Lincoln, one of five Marines attached to the 55 member unit, received an emergency call from the United Nations headquarters office in Haiti--a UN vehicle had hit five Haitians and ASC's assistance was required. The victims would be at the hospital within 10 minutes.

ASC immediately initiated their mass casualty plan, putting into action what they had only practiced before.

When the UN convoy carrying the victims arrived, the staff discovered that it wasn't Haitians who had been injured, but Canadian military members whose UN vehicle had been hit by a Haitian dump truck. It was also discovered that there weren't five but six seriously injured patients.

"They were bloody, broken, and dazed when they were brought in," said LT Tom McCoy, MSC, ASC's company

commander. "Somebody who'd been at the accident scene said they were surprised that anyone lived through that crash."

LCDR David Sechler, MC, the ASC clinical director, supervised the initial examination of the victims. One was immediately sent to the operating room for emergency surgery. Two others were operated on in the emergency room. All six were treated for injuries ranging from deep gashes to numerous broken bones to concussions to chest bruises.

"LCDR Fernandez (ASC's orthopedic surgeon) ended up working on five of the patients," said McCoy. Other staff members spent the evening and night stabilizing the patients and arranging for the most seriously injured to be medically evacuated. By the time all the patients had been treated and three medevac'ed to Miami, it was 1:00 a.m.

According to McCoy, ASC had two mass casualty drills since they arrived in September, preparing for incidents like this, and were planning a third in a few days.

"We called it (the drill) off when we had the real thing," he said. "You could tell the way people (other military members) treated us in the mess hall the next morning that they thought we did a good job."

In addition to caring for United Nations and United States personnel in Haiti, ASC also provides humanitarian assistance, including immunization clinics, minor surgery and general medicine, and pharmacy support. As of 2 December, they have treated more than 2,800 Haitians.

ASC relieved the Army's 261st Medical Unit in September and will remain in Haiti until March 1997. By LT Tom McCoy, MSC, ASC, and Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Headline: Surgeon Takes To Sky To Deliver Medicine

Twenty-nine Palms, CA--The sky isn't even the limit for CAPT Kenneth Koskella, MC, when it comes to delivering good medicine.

Koskella, an orthopedic surgeon at Naval Hospital (NH) Twenty-nine Palms, has taken to the skies above the Mojave Desert to deliver specialty medical care to the military families of Naval Air Warfare Center China Lake, CA, which is about 170 miles away from the hospital as the crow -er-doctor flies.

Koskella knows from personal experience just how long those miles can be for a family in need of specialty health care. Ten years ago, before he became a doctor, Koskella was the safety and operations officer as well as a pilot with Air Test and Evaluation Squadron Five (VX-5) at China Lake.

"When a patient at China Lake needs specialty care, they either have to see a civilian doctor in the local community of Ridgecrest and pay the cost shares of TRICARE Standard or go through the expense of buying gas to drive all the way to San Diego for a medical appointment and possibly having to rent a motel room overnight," said

Koskella. "Some of these young families just don't make enough money to survive those kinds of expenses."

Because of China Lake's extreme isolation, the lowest cost TRICARE option, TRICARE Prime, isn't available to military families in the area.

Koskella, who is director of surgical services at NH Twentynine Palms, makes monthly trips to China Lake via his experimental aircraft he built himself. During each of his trips, Koskella sees between 20 to 25 patients, saving the commands at China Lake and the taxpayers anywhere from \$4,000 to \$6,000 per month in travel money. Just as importantly, his trips provide a convenience to both patients and the Line commands at China Lake. Patients can be seen and be back on the job or home the same day.

"Because of the inconvenience and expense of specialty medical care at China Lake, some of these patients would rather just live with their pain until they transfer to another command or get out of the military. This could lead to an exacerbation of the problem, creating much more extensive medical care than originally needed and, of course, much more expense for the patient or for the government," said Koskella.

Koskella has recruited another specialist to fly with him to China Lake. LT Roxanne Macomber, MC, a NH Twentynine Palms' pediatrician, sees young patients in the Well Baby Clinic while Koskella sees his patients. According to Macomber, she doesn't mind flying with Koskella as long as he keeps the plane straight and level -- no loops, dips or sharp turns from his test pilot days.

By Dan Barber, NH Twentynine Palms

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Headline: Corpsman Picked As Navy's Top Athlete

Twentynine Palms, CA--HMCS Warrick Yeager, 42, head of Naval Hospital (NH) Twentynine Palms' personnel department, has been selected by the U.S. Military Sports Association as the Navy's Athlete of the Year for 1996.

Yeager is one of the nation's top race walkers, winning more than a dozen races in 1996, including the USA National Championship in the Open and Masters 40K National Racewalk, the USA National Masters 5K Championship, the USA Track and Field National Masters Championship, the USA Track and Field Open for the 5K Racewalk and 10K Racewalk, and the Open 20K Olympic Trials Qualifying Race.

Yeager will travel to Washington, DC in January for the 62nd Annual Pride of the Nation Reception and Awards Presentation Banquet and the Touchdown Club of Washington Awards Dinner. The Armed Forces Athlete of the Year, for which Yeager is a contender, will be selected and honored at this event.

Yeager is a possible contender for the U.S. Olympic Track and Field Team in 2000. If he is selected for the team, he will be the oldest athlete ever to represent America in Olympic track and field competitions.

By Dan Barber, NH Twentynine Palms

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Headline: Navy Nutrition Guide Now Available

Washington, DC--The Navy's Nutrition And Weight Control Self-Study Guide, designed to help Sailors and Marines manage their weight safely and effectively, is now on line.

"I didn't write this for the health care professional," said LT Leslie Cox, MSC, a registered dietitian who edited and wrote the guide. "I wrote it for one person--the Sailor or Marine who has trouble keeping within body fat standards."

According to Cox, nutrition programs officer at the Bureau of Naval Personnel (BUPERS), the guide is written in simple, straight-forward language that even people who have very little knowledge of nutrition will understand. She expects the guide to be particularly helpful to individuals who serve in isolated areas or who are deployed and don't have a hospital or clinic with a dietitian to help them lose weight.

More than a dozen health specialists collaborated on the guide, which includes information about basic nutrition, exercising to lose weight, food labeling, eating away from home, and recipe modification.

The guide will be available through the BUPERS Homepage at <http://www.ncts.navy.mil/homepages/bupers/weight.html>.

For individuals who don't have Internet access, Cox will provide an WordPerfect 6.1 copy of the guide on a 3 1/2 inch disk in exchange for a unused, formatted disk and a self-addressed return label. Mail them to: LT Leslie Cox, MSC, BUPERS, PERS-601C, 2 Navy Annex, Washington, DC 20370-6010.

Printed copies can also be ordered from the Navy Supply System. The stock number is 0500-LP-0098780. There is a 25 per order limit.

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Surgery and Medicine

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Headline: DOD Improves Marijuana Detection Techniques

Washington, DC--Despite statistics showing marijuana use among young people in the U.S. increased significantly in 1995, the Navy continues to successfully pursue drug-free workplaces and promote healthy lifestyles.

DOD surveys show self-admitted drug use among Sailors decreased dramatically, from 47 percent in 1981 to 3.6 percent in 1995. The statistics reflect widespread support of all hands and the success of the zero tolerance policy that is the cornerstone of the Navy's drug program.

To ensure continued success, DOD drug testing laboratories are taking advantage of technological advances to enhance the urinalysis detection of marijuana (THC). A recent ALNAV message from Chief of Naval Operations ADM Jay Johnson announced that since mid-November drug labs have been screening and processing urinalysis samples with a new,

modified THC reagent. It is more sensitive to a broader range of THC metabolites than the one previously used. The screening and confirmation cut-off levels remain the same for a "positive" result.

"Increased capability to detect marijuana is worthwhile if it has a deterrent effect," CNO said in the ALNAV. "Sailors who choose to use marijuana or other drugs will get caught, be disciplined and separated. This is not a scare tactic ... I want our Sailors to know about this new capability so they will make informed choices in avoiding drugs."

Johnson also pointed out, "Using the modified THC reagent in FY 97 would result in an increase of the THC positives unless we reemphasize our policy on zero tolerance for drug abuse with all hands."

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Headline: Navy League Looking For Outstanding Naval People

The Navy League of the United States, a national organization that is a Navy advocate, each year recognizes outstanding Sailors, Marines and naval civilians with several prestigious awards.

These awards include:

- The John Paul Jones Award for inspirational leadership (Navy officer)
- The Admiral Claude V. Ricketts Award for inspirational leadership (Navy E-7 and above)
- The Admiral Claude V. Ricketts Award for inspirational leadership (Navy E-6 and below)
- The Winifred Quick Collins Award for inspirational leadership (Navy or Marine Corps female officer)
- The General John A. Lejeune Award for inspirational leadership (Marine Corps officer)
- The General Gerald C. Thomas Award for inspirational leadership (Marine Corps enlisted)
- The Rear Admiral William S. Parsons Award for scientific and technical progress (Navy or Marine Corps enlisted, officers or civilian)
- The Stephen Decatur Award for operational competence (Navy officer or enlisted)
- The General Holland M. Smith Award for literary achievement (Marine Corps officer or enlisted)
- The Alfred Thayer Mahan Award for literary achievement (Navy or Marine Corps officer, enlisted or civilian)
- The Robert M. Thompson Award for outstanding civilian leadership (Navy or Marine Corps)
- The Honorable J. William Middendorf II Award for engineering excellence (Navy E-6 and below)
- The Admiral Ben Moreell Award for logistical competence (Navy or Marine Corps officer)
- The Admiral Ben Moreell Award for logistical competence (Navy or Marine Corps enlisted)

Nomination applications and information is available

through the Navy League's Homepage <http://www.navyleague.org>. Deadline for all these awards is 15 January 1997.

Awards coordinator at the Navy League in Alexandria, VA, is Louise Halsey, (703) 528-1775, ext. 351.

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Headline: TRICARE Question and Answer

Q. When will TRICARE Europe sign-up begin?

A. TRICARE Europe Prime enrollment is already in full swing throughout Europe.

Briefings have been and will continue to be given to all eligible Department of Defense beneficiaries. As is the case with the Air Force and the Army, Navy hospitals and clinics throughout Europe are engaged in a "full court press" to ensure enrollment in TRICARE Europe Prime for active duty and family members is completed by the start of 1997.

"All of the Navy medical facilities in Europe are currently on track with active duty and family member enrollment," said LT Hugh Cox, MSC, the TRICARE programs officer for Naval Forces Europe. Cox urged active duty and family members to attend a TRICARE briefing, not only to get information about TRICARE Europe, but to help them understand their military health care benefit no matter where they are stationed, overseas or in the United States.

Of course, as with TRICARE in other regions, non-active duty beneficiaries have the option not to enroll in Prime. Those who chose not to enroll in TRICARE Europe Prime will be covered under TRICARE Europe Standard and will have to pay the deductibles and cost shares for care received from civilian providers.

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Headline: Healthwatch: Healthy Holiday Recipes Now On Line

Norfolk, VA--One of the most important actions you can take to maintain good health is to eat right. During the holiday season, that may seem a close to impossible task, but take heart--help is only a modem dial up away.

The Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) in Norfolk, VA, has planned a holiday feast, complete with step-by-step recipes, for families big (100 people) or small (less than ten) and put it on their Homepage.

Honey basted roast turkey with giblet gravy, wild rice with mushrooms, honey baked acorn squash, and cranberry orange salad--the recipes for all these holiday foods is available on line for the holiday cook.

Developing the recipes for NEHC's Homepage is MSCS Carol Wininger and MS1 Patricia Stallings of the Navy Food Management Team (NFMT) in Norfolk, VA. Wininger and Stallings search for recipes that are healthful and tasty. If they can't find what they want, they adapt recipes themselves.

While they always look at the nutritional bottom line of each recipe--every recipe gets less than 30 percent of

its calories from fat, is low in sodium and cholesterol, and high in nutrients--there's another reason why a recipe is selected.

"If it doesn't taste good, no matter how healthful it is, we consider it a failure. It doesn't go on the Homepage," said Wininger. "You shouldn't have to feel like you're doing penance to eat right."

While these recipes can help you eat right, Wininger has a word of caution for holiday revelers: watch your serving size and number of servings.

"If you have seconds of everything, you double the amount of fat, sodium and calories you're taking in with each additional serving," she said. "Think about that when you reach for seconds."

The NEHC Homepage, with its holiday recipes, is at <http://ehc40.med.navy.mil>.

By Jan Davis, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery

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Note: Navy and Marine Corps Medical News (MEDNEWS) will not be published 26 December 1996. Happy holidays to you all!

Feedback and comments are welcome. Story submissions are encouraged. Contact Jan Davis, MEDNEWS editor, at e-mail address mednews@bms200.med.navy.mil, telephone 202/762-3223 (DSN 762-3223), or fax 202/762-3224.